



## Stiggins Chapter 6: Essay Assessment

<p><b>What is essay? When to use essay?</b></p> <p>An essay is a composition on a particular theme or subject and generally analytic, speculative or interpretive. An essay can vary in length but is longer than a short-answer response. In an academic setting, a prompt written by the teacher is necessary for the students to have a clear idea of what they are writing about and how they will be evaluated.</p> <p>Essay can be used to assess learning targets for knowledge, reasoning, performance, and product development.</p> <p>Best for explaining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reasoning</li> <li>• relationships between facts</li> <li>• knowledge/understanding prerequisite for a performance or product</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development of sound essay exercises,</b> in three steps (p. 143):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specify the knowledge students are supposed to command in preparing a response.</li> <li>2. Specify the kind(s) of reasoning or problem solving respondents are to carry out. Be clear about what respondents are to write about.</li> <li>3. Point the direction to an appropriate response without giving away the answer. Good exercises literally list the key elements of a good response without cueing the unprepared examinee on how to succeed.</li> </ol> <p>Always start with learning targets. When crafting prompts for an essay assessment <b>specificity</b> is essential. Now is not the time to be vague.</p> <p>(See p. 145 for a checklist of characteristics of sound essay assessment)</p>
<p> <b>Watch out for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not good for isolated facts</li> <li>• Not good for students lacking proficiency in English language writing</li> <li>• Scoring is very time intensive</li> <li>• Potential for subjective grading</li> <li>• Lack of specificity in prompt and scoring</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scoring essay assessment</b></p> <p>Students need to know what success looks like in order to succeed. Share the rubric/checklist with students <i>before</i> delivering assessment.</p> <p>The Checklist (p. 147):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires coverage of certain material</li> <li>• Lists performance requirements explicitly</li> <li>• Each requirement has an assigned point value</li> <li>• Missing items receive no credit</li> </ul>
<p><b>How might you use essay assessment?</b></p> <p><b>Discipline-specific examples</b></p>	<p>The Rubric (p. 148):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines achievement on a performance spectrum</li> <li>• Defines performance requirements on this spectrum</li> <li>• Each level of this spectrum is assigned point value</li> <li>• Holistic: assesses the entire essay</li> <li>• Analytical: assesses separate parts of essay</li> </ul>

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